UNITY.

A Pamphlet Mission for

Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion.

Published Semi-Monthly, 75 Madison St., Chicago. | December 15, 1878. | Vol. 2. No. 8. | Price, 10 Cents. Per Year, $1.50.

Jesus and the Prophets in History.

BY REV. J. VILA BLAKE.

Luke ix:34: "*While he thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed him.*"

Two things or ideas or personalities only do mankind reverence, or even admit the existence of, or so much as the possibility of—Humanity and God. The Creator and the Creature appear plainly to the eyes of human beings, or to their mind's-eye, but men insist upon it that men are the only creatures. Probably this idea seldom is stated plainly in words, or perhaps even acknowledged. Only now and then comes a philosopher who invents expression, or discovers statements, for the most profound spiritual facts; or a prophet or saint who does the same for the inscrutable religious life, setting up reflectors in which men see themselves—and with rapture; for no sight, earthly or heavenly, is so transporting. But before the philosopher and prophet, or without them, men do believe in this simple duality, and do affirm to themselves confidently that they are themselves the only creatures. It appears inevitable that the creature is as much one as the Creator, and that there is only God and man. To his fellow, every Man reaches out with love, as being of a common spirit, a like creature; to the Creator, man looks up with the awe, wonder and worship wherewith we think of the Infinite above and beneath us, and on all sides about us, as, indeed, like our fellow-creatures, of a

common spirit with us, but the solution of us, the solving and dispersion of the mystery of ourselves by removal to infinite distance, where is the transcendent Mystery, the adorable Unity, where all selves run together into Self, all lives into Life, all creatures into Creation, all immortals into Immortality, all times into Eternity, all beings into God. If we try never so hard, we cannot admit to ourselves or put it into language that there are any finite creatures save ourselves,—our internal selves. The animals are human beings precisely so far as they *are* at all; they are in process of erection, like great towers the turrets and pinacles of which do not yet appear, nor are even predicted except to the instructed eye of an architect. But who can look on a brute creature without a warm fellow-feeling, a feeling of connection, of intimacy, of relationship? True, the number of men is small who treat animals well, and large who treat them more brutally than the brutes themselves know how to act. But reflect how small the number of men who treat their own kind well. Anatomically it is certain that if sensation were fine enough, I could feel the brute creation in my bones. Aesthetically I am conscious of them in my sports, in my passions, at my table. It is not much of an objection that these brutes are dumb. If the *quality* of speech be a matter of moment, it is plain that some speaking creatures were better dumb. Rip Van Winkle thought well of the dumbness of Hudson's men, especially if the trait extended to their daughters. To be inarticulate is not necessarily to be inexpressive. Witness the raptures that float on music, or the peace and strength that art detects in colors and form. How amazing are the cries of animals! how exquisite! how tremendous! Many a man who mumbles his mother-tongue, surly and sottish, for his victuals and drink, is less expressive than the canary, and mayhap has less of the quality of the sunshine active in him than that little yellow breast thrusts into its song. A day or two ago, a stray cat adopted me and asked with superior eloquence that I should adopt her. As I watched her behavior, it struck me very forcibly that I would act just so if I were shaped like a cat, retaining my present mind and nature. I

confess to a warm sympathy with Titania. I am not sure but the delightful Bottom had as wise and serviceable a head after Puck's manipulation of him as before. How admirable the terms of the fairy queen's approbation;

> "I thy amiable cheeks do coy
> And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy."

Nothing can exceed the expressiveness with which those ears gesticulate. What can be more shrewdly amiable than the cheek and eye, what more satisfying than the massive innocence, the pensive repose, the statuesque deliberation of that delightful creature. A wise and good man said that when he met a friendly little dog, who came running to meet him, all one animated gesture of delight, turning and curving his lissom body with inimitable and changeable grace, shaking indescribable beauties of motion from his feet, falling like flakes of down upon the air, erecting himself finally on his hinder legs and stretching out one trembling little paw towards his human fellow,—then he, the speaking creature, could not help saying, regarding the paw, "Have patience, little friend, it will be a hand some day." The eccentric, kindly, excellent, learned Dr. Russell of Salem, I heard mentioning a dog of fine character who had "gone over to the majority" of creatures, where, said the Doctor, "I hope to meet him sometime when he is something better than a dog." Animals lead me into an enchanted sphere. I am recalled to my childhood, to the Arabian Nights and to other folk-stories nearer home; I half expect to see the hairy skins crack, and a glowing youth or beautiful maid spring from the fissure, standing on the soft hide, the whilom prison of enchantment, as on a carpet. Nor would I upon graver thought, dismiss the expectation with a jest. Truly, if the sensibility that makes a brute's fibers responsive to love and shame, may perish after that ineffable draught of life, it is not easy to find a good reason why the human consciousness should not follow the same fashion of extinction. We know not what possibilities lie in that beatific unity which binds all beings to the divine source of creatures.

"The chain of things
The next unto the farthest brings;
And striving to be man, the worm
Aspires through all the rounds of form."

It is thus that we admit no creature except in our own likeness as to the interior constitution. Instinctively and without question we treat the planets in like manner. If they are inhabited, we feel confident it is by men like ourselves as to mind and soul, whatever possible difference in external shape unknown physical conditions may cause. We have so many hints or items concerning our neighbor Mars, by means of the telescope, that we are even speculating a little as to the possibility of communication with the people therein. If its ruddy light can reach us, that proves material transaction of some sort, and it is impossible to say what fine electrical or other mode of force may circulate between, which may be made obedient to human will and harnessed to a dray of news. But it is noticeable that in all this happy anticipation, no doubt obtrudes of the certainty of mutual apprehension and comprehension when the communicating line of the *Stellagraph* be discovered. Every one takes it for granted without question that, if there be creatures on Mars, they must resemble us and indeed be identical in interior structure of mind and heart, even if their physical conditions, for aught we can say, require a coat of fur, or of feathers and wings, or ten heads and twenty arms. The outward shape may be adapted to different physical stages or conditions, but the inward nature must perforce be the same, differing as one star differs from another in magnitude and glory, but all burning with the same celestial fire.

But now, in pursuing this thought, which I think we must follow in spite of us as no *ignis-fatuus* or deceiving flame of marsh-gas, but a "phantom of delight," we come upon a *consequence* and an *analogy* in human experience. The consequence is that every great person is great by illustrating in himself the general glory of the creature and showing resplendently what humanity is by possibility and ought to be by its daily examples; and every such great person is held rightfully

in religious reverence. The analogy is that, just as in creation all creatures, to our senses and thought, congregate in men, so in history men disappear in man. The individual vanishes. The greater he is, the more divine, the more contributing to depict the common creature of God,—the more he retires behind this universal form and leaves the common glory of the creature standing alone. The differences in the special persons who are so great and good are just what escape us in history. It appears that every one comes into the world, according to the immeasurable providence, to act his individual part and thereby help on the common personality to such degree that the individual is sunk in it and forgotten. The greatest and best persons, the large, round, unselfish, spiritual souls, vanish from record, leaving their greatness swimming like an orb in the heavens, to the eye unsupported, but in truth a factor of the cosmical order. How little we know of the greatest of all men of this world, "the far forgotten stars of human kind." They appear and run their race in a cloudy veil of legend and myth, which makes misty, but does not destroy, the great figure. The details, the features, the colors, may be obscured or even erased; the sublime outline is luminous and indestructible. We love, of course, to tear away the veil, to disengage the adorable figure from its floating vapors of legends and marvels and local prides, prejudices and portrayals. But it never can be done certainly, still less entirely. The great soul lived so grandly in display of the common creature that only the glorified creature is to be found. As we peer into the mists of the ages, rolling up in banks with dark edges, we find the centre luminous around a shadowy form sublime, colossal, already appropriated by the creature and never to be torn from the devotion of the world's heart. Time, age, birth, death, lineage, education, incidents, facts, figure, shape, tumble over the edge of memory and disappear altogether, or are so interwoven with fecund dreams and majestic visions that they cannot be disentangled. This happens the more surely and readily because these peerless men are always notable failures, in their own times, to the common eye. They are des-

pised, called demented or seditious or profane, driven from place to place by violence, rejected, scorned, banished, imprisoned, killed. When the common creature wakes up to behold and adore the bulk and majesty of the form outlined through the haze of prejudice and passion, 'tis too late to rescue the features from the shadow of those divine sorrows. The world sets itself thenceforth to reverence the mighty figure and to seek with all the arts of the critic to restore the face, the eye, the smile, the lips, the incidents, the person. How each little success is heralded! how each new glimpse is treasured! But still the full triumph is impossible; the shadows rest forever.

Alight upon any of the transcendent names, and you will find this fate. Take Socrates, regarding whom a recent writer says "the most sympathizing minds are not 'great sized monsters of ingratitutde.' They persist, for instance, in claiming that human nature invested largely in Socrates, and has funded earnings by him, although positively all we know of him has come down dribbling through Plato and Xenophon. He loved to talk; but he had a stylus too, and used to scribble upon papyrus leaves, no doubt, and possibly be jotted down upon a waxen tablet the heads of his reply to the charge of impiety. What would we not give for a single leaf of the papyrus. * * * * Before the battle of Potidæa, he stood in the inclement weather, thinly clad, without food, motionless, for more than twenty-four successive hours; nothing disturbed him; nothing broke up the inner attention of his trance. What was it all about?"[1]

We have but a bare outline of the Chinese sage Confucius. "No one wrote his life in detail, and we must piece bits of information together, to learn where he journeyed, whom he knew and loved and what he did." He fell upon a time of social disorders, tumults and civil wars, which impeded his influence and destroyed the records of him. After his death, his teachers were massacred and their books burned. He was often contemned, rejected, banished. He wandered in bitter exile for many years. He was poor, and suffered from hunger.

[1] John Weiss.

He was abused, maligned, ridiculed, plotted against, his life threatened and attempted. "His desciples felt his outward failure. They emphasized the burdens of old age, disappointment and disease that weighed on him when he crept about on his staff, saying, "The mountain must crumble, the strong beam must break, and the wise man must wither like a plant.' "[2]

Gotama Buddha looms up like a great hill in an oriental haze. Many think that of all the great spirits of the earth, his career and character come the nearest to that of Jesus. But we know very little about him. His life is crusted all over with legends till it resembles one of those objects covered with quartz by the waters of certain mineral springs,—a mass of gorgeous crystals which give hardly a hint of the shape on which they were deposited. In Thibet. you may find more than a dozen different versions of his death ranging in time over a span of 2,000 years. The Chinese place it in the 10th century B. C.; the Singhalese in the 6th, some scholars take the latter date and some place it in the 5th, Century B. C.; but it is admitted that after the best substantiated epoch is found, "dogmatic requirements, reported prophecies, and other errors have had much to do with fixing the recognized dates, after all."[3] Some scholars have been sceptical as to his very existence; others, less venturesome with the venerable documents, still admit that Gotama's discourses were recast by later hands and even his story invented by disciples two or three centuries after him. If we may believe the record, his early preaching was far from triumphant; like others of the greatest and best, he was derided, accused of heresy, charged with insanity, driven from his country. But his life is involved in a tangle of simple fictions, and his great figure alone, pure, self-sacrificing, spiritual, arises in the lowlands, ascending, gigantic, in the vapors of myths and oral traditions by which all the marks and features of the person are dispersed and only a sublime shape is left. Yet this Gotama Buddha founded a religion which at present, after twenty-five centuries of life, is professed by a

2 Samuel Johnson, "Oriental Religions; China."
3 Samuel Johnson, "Oriental Religions; India."

third of the human race.[4] In like manner Zoroaster appears behind the mists of centuries which scholars cannot agree among themselves to number. The various dates assigned to him differ by thousands of years, and even the most careful critical views leave margins of many hundreds. 'Tis not even agreed among the learned whether he really existed or is altogether a myth. Tradition surrounds him with legends and miracles; he hears oracles, receives revelations, obtains sacred words from the flames, and endures temptations by the devil which are the centre of many marvellous reports, recalling the temptation of Jesus, of Job, of Luther, of Abraham according to Rabbinical legends; and many other similar traditions. All we know of him is scantily gleaned from a very few of the oldest and most difficult books of the Avesta. Yet the bare outline discovers a great figure, no doubt filled with majesty in his time and place; and a prayer of the Avesta calls him the one "who first thought good thoughts, who first spoke good words, who first performed good actions, who was the first priest, the first warrior, the first cultivator of the soil, the first prophet, the first who was inspired, the first who has given to mankind nature and truth and words, and hearing of words, and wealth and all good, created by Mazda, of rightful appearance. * * * * Through his knowledge and speech the waters and trees become desirous of growing; through his knowledge and speech, all beings, created by the beneficent spirit, are uttering words of happiness." I might speak of Moses in similar terms,—a great shape, but only a shape, dim with distance, hung with the hoar frost of time, and enveloped in the magical splendors which a credulous and adoring race evolved from its faith and imagination. Indeed, this shadowiness of the very great, by which they appear, as it were, elemental, and seem resolved into absolute humanity without accidents, into the one creature of the one Creator,—this, I say, is not confined to priests and prophets of religion. Take for example Shakespeare, of whom our ignorance is profound and impenetrable. What goes under that name is so

4 Five hundred millions, according to recent figures.

unparalleled and transcendent after its kind, that critics arise who seek to transfer the fame to Lord Bacon because he is better known. But probably the mind that teemed with these creations could not be known. It is the same with Homer. Seven cities or more contend for the honor of his birth and recite romantic legends of his parentage, blindness, poverty and sorrow; and they agree not any more upon the time of birth than the place, for eight different epochs claim him, spanning a stretch between the earliest and latest, of four hundred and sixty years. At last appears the Wolfian School of critics who think no such man ever existed, and the community of scholars has not yet ended that debate.

It is thus that the good and great are absorbed. As men can surmise or see no other creatures than themselves, but must view all creatures, now visible or forever possible, as really human in essence, whatever the shape be, thus sinking all diverse creatures in the one thought of the creature, so do the very good and great, the starry souls, hasten by inevitable law to merge themselves in the race, the men being sunk and absorbed in man: so that the persons being no longer visible, or being resolved into dear but dim shadows, their goodness and greatness may appear by themselves in all their sublimity.

No wonder, then, that we find it so with Jesus, whose dear and divine character we like to celebrate: He belongs to this company, too good, too great, for their own perpetuation. They step aside to make room for the divine stream that flows by them, and catches them up on its breast. We know more of Jesus by some happy circumstances, than of many others of the "far forgotten stars." Still, how little we know of him! What a shadow broods over him! a bright, heavenly shade, like that which descended over the group on the Mount of Transfiguration, but still a shadow, baffling and impenetrable. No one knows the year or month or day of his birth, and the world gradually settled, for different reasons, upon the twenty-fifth day of December, in order that we might not fail to decorate with our worship so great an advent, though ignorant of the moment. We have no real knowledge as to where he was

born, although divers hints and indications point to Nazareth. The beautiful story of the parental journey to Bethlehem, the manger in the stall, the angels' songs, the shepherds, the star, the Magi, are all legends with which the devout imagination of his followers, on fire with so holy and so great a character, invested the hidden incidents of his infancy. Being the great Messiah in their eyes, the long-expected Deliverer who must come of David's line, he must come from Bethlehem, the city of David, and all the lovely circle of stories sprang, no doubt, from that idea. What was his boyhood, his schooling, his sports, his labors? What were those thirty years of preparation, those crucible-years from whose glowing depth came out, when the ignition was complete, like crystals from a chemist's alembic, that short momentous season,—the ministry, the triumph, the betrayal, the cross? All these have escaped the world which would gladly treasure them in its heart. His brief career of two or three years is covered all over with marvels and myths that reveal their source in the oriental imagination and the ideas of the time. "The miraculous element does indeed stroll into every scene and moment, as children who, running to mix with great occasions, are overlooked and not turned out." Like all others of the great company of such-like souls, Jesus shines through a haze. He came "trailing clouds of glory," but still clouds; and thereafter, no winds sweeping over the plains of the ages, nor tempests that the controversies of men have raised, nor the blasts of free criticism, textual and historical, which indeed in these latter years one might call hurricanes, have sufficed to disperse those clouds.

And yet, in some things, Jesus stands out with insular definition, with the distinctness of an amazing shape cut from a block of marble, which one can walk round and see on all sides. In these incidents, how rational, how sturdy, how robust he appears! He is vigorous; he understands himself, as we say. You cannot, in his tenderness, discover the least outline of disability, sickliness, or sentimental susceptibility. He is in sound health. He believes in health, like Gotama, who, after years of ascetic experiment, decided that to starve the body does not

nourish the spirit, and changed his mode of living, while his companions fled with horror, from the sight of his ruddy and glowing face. Take, for example, the instances recorded of Jesus' shrewd and defiant reserve when he was questioned, captiously or treacherously. How quick his perceptions, how keen his reasoning! For instance, in regard to his works of healing: "What," asks a writer, "was this personal property which became eventually so exaggerated? It was a piercing, spiritual domination which flowed through every pore of a magnetic body, kept in absolute chastity and in its best estate. It was a penetrating command, by presence, look, touch and speech, over a class of nervous and mental diseases which have been always subject to this influence, and especially in the East. * * * The scripture miracles lay great stress upon faith; these cures depend upon implicit confidence on the part of the patient. Jesus would not undertake to exercise his influence, if he were not positively certain that the requisite faith was forthcoming."[5] Now when his envious enemies say, "This fellow is in league with Beelzebub, casting out devils and performing his cures by aid of the Archfiend," Jesus answered them: "Does not Satan seek to retain and increase his power? But if he conspire to cast out his own minions, how thereby can he establish his power? for every kingdom or city or house divided against itself must fall. Besides, do I not see others, even your own children, curing these disorders? Now if I do this by conspiracy with Satan, by what do you and your children work the cures?" To take another instance; the captious complained because he healed on the Sabbath: he answered,—"A misfortune may happen on the Sabbath, as on other days; now when an accident happens on the Sabbath to one of your sheep, and it falls into a pit, I have seen you lift it out. How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?" Often he was very bold when dealing with a sham, and shot prodigious shafts with his acute reason; as when the traditionalists came to him complaining because his friends did not wash before eating, con-

5. John Weiss, "The Spirit that was in Jesus," in Radical Review, No. 3.

trary to the traditions of the elders. He said: "You charge that I transgress the traditions of the elders; but these elders are men. Why do you, by their tradition, transgress a command of God? For God said, Honor thy father and mother; but when your parents come and ask some help out of your property, you hasten to pronounce a vow over it and then say you are forbidden by your oath to give it to your parents, according to the precepts of the elders.[6] Thus have you evaded God's command and made it of no effect by your traditions. O you hypocrites, it was you that Esaias meant when he said, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commands of men.'" His piercing intelligence, part genius and part holiness, made him terrific when the fountains of his love were broken up by oppression or sacrilege. A recent writer about Jesus says of him:

"Jesus was fond of poor men, a lover of despicable people, a sympathizer with those who were not in society. In a most despotic, reckless, cruel age of the world, that played the game of empire with nations for pawns, and limited fraternity to clique feelings; that sacked whole provinces to garnish a Roman triumph, squeezing tributary people to provide for Roman banquets; that made Jewish patriotism and religious recollections the object of its particular spite,—he, standing all alone, under the flapping Roman eagle, renewed the old protest of humanity, denounced the feeling of caste, deliberately took the side that was then the most forlorn and miserable, and longed to have the heavy-laden sympathize with him, because, he said by way of inducement, he had a meek and lowly heart. Such pride of Heaven resided in him that he found no company fit for himself, except among sinners. * * * * His age adored degree, priority and place; he worshipped at the shrine of the beggar's person, and wafted his wishes for incense. * * * For it was love that inspired this man with anger. We still hear the snap of that whip in the

vii:10-13.

temple; indeed, we hope the report of that was not fabricated. No, it has a sound too human. It intensifies for us the tone of his great soul. How many things the world has lost forever; plays of the old Greek tragedians, some books of Livy and the younger Pliny, poems of Dante, and all the manuscripts of Shakspeare! But we would not for all of them, nor for gems and treasures sunk in seas, miss the sound that the scourge made. It builds in the air the outline of a brave protester, of one who hated to see merchandise made of holy things." * * * He was a good hater because he was an adorable lover; that is the reason why we never can taste ill-temper in his words. They gathered on the horizon, sombre and stern; they rolled over guilty heads; they came up edged with lightning; but they were condensed from Nature's great elements, not from the petty pique of a man; and their freight was an auspicious errand. Whenever in modern times, while a critical moment of morality impends, we hear a mutter of that thunder from Judea's remote horizon, it bids us shudder with the expectation of a refreshing season near at hand; the elemental Jesus menaces in his apostles; the sullen air shall be broken into clearness by those bolts."[7]

With these just words, I close my sermon. I end as I began. Mankind cannot conceive of any creatures save human ones. Jesus belongs to us. He is a creature. He worshipped and prayed, he was bowed down and lifted up, he was filled with love, pity, error, wrath—with all the elements that mix to make a man. "While he thus spake there came a cloud and overshadowed him." Out of this cloud shoot a few dazzling lights,—rare, blinding flashes of distinct shape. But within the cloud we must be content to see him, not effaced, dim with splendor, retiring from our eyes as to his proper lineaments, to comfort and encourage us with the glory of the creature.

7. John Weiss, "The Spirit that was in Jesus," in Radical Review, No. 3.

A

Service of Joy

FOR

OLD AND YOUNG

AT

CHRISTMAS.

"PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN."

I.

ANTHEM.

II.

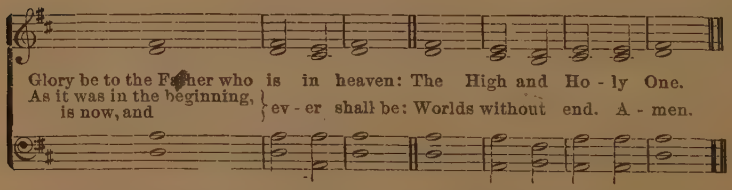
O come, let us walk in the light of the Lord; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with you. I will put my law within you and write it in your hearts: And ye shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest of you, saith the Lord. For I will pour out my Spirit upon all men. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

III.

All, standing, will unite in reading, saying:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And God saw everything that he had made: and behold, it was very good.

GLORIA (*Choir or Children*).



All:—Glory be to God in the highest: And on earth peace, good will to men! For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given. And he shall grow in stature and in favor with God and man. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.

Choir—GLORIA.

All:—The Spirit of the Lord shall be upon him, annointing him to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, and to proclaim freedom to the bound.

Choir—GLORIA.

All:—How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that proclaimeth peace, that publisheth salvation! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Choir—GLORIA.

All:—Jesus said: Thou knowest the commandments. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no commandment greater than these.

Choir—GLORIA.

All:—Jesus said: If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. He, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame. And though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.

Here read in responses:

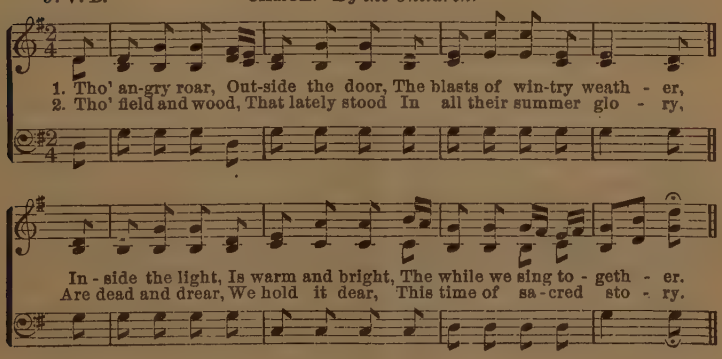
He bore witness to the truth;
He went about doing good;
We keep this day in memory of him;
He took little children in his arms,
And blessed them, saying,
Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.
May the spirit be in us which was in Jesus;
The spirit of love and the spirit of truth.
Yea, verily, for this is the glad Christmas time.

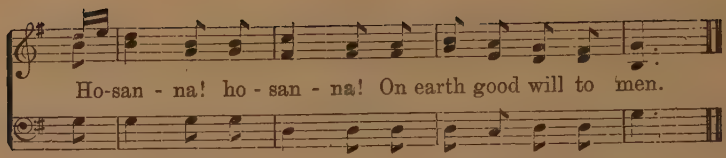
Choir—GLORIA.

All seated.

IV.

J. V. B. CAROL.—*By the Children.*





3. On meadow brown
The snow comes down,
In wintry drifts and shallows;
But all the more
We bless the store
Of mirth that Christmas hallows.

4. The garden dead,
Lies in its bed;
But children are the flowers
Of garden room
Within the home,
That blooms in Christmas hours.

5. The songs they sing,
The hymns they bring,
Of gladdess, where they gather,
From childhood's mouth
Come like the South
Warm wind in winter weather.

6. With carols come!
No voice be dumb!
Loud rise the acclamations:
'Tis Jesus' birth,
And round the earth,
Roll birth-songs of the nations.

V.

PRAYER.

All standing and reading together:

Our Father: For the joys of Christmas, its merry carols and bright gifts, we thank thee. For that great and good One whose birth we celebrate, we thank thee. For the lessons He taught and the example He gave us, we thank thee. May we express our thanks, not in words so much as in happy hearts, in merry carolings, in grateful love and in tender pity for the poor, the hungry, the sick, and all who cannot have a merry Christmas. Thus may we all, as little children, learn to carry with us the good news—Peace on earth and good will to men—that we may be more like Jesus, and better children of thine, for ever and ever—Amen.

VI.

HYMN.—*Or Anthem by Choir.*

VII.

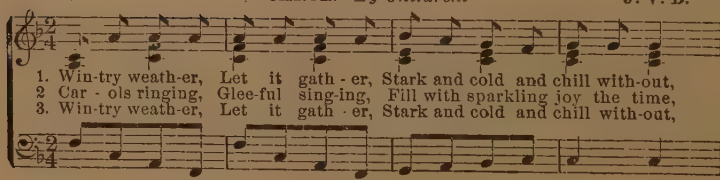
RECITATIONS.—*Interspersed with Music.*

VIII.

ADDRESSES.—*By Pastor and others.*

IX

J. V. B. CAROL.—*By Children.* J. V. B.



While so mer - ry, Blithe and cheery, Rings our Christmas car - ol out.
Bells are peal-ing, Soft - ly stealing O'er the heart their ho - ly chime.
While so mer - ry, Blithe and cheery, Rings our Christmas car - ol out.

Hark! the voic - es! Children's voic-es! How they gleam and glow with joy!
Lo! the fac - es! See the grac-es Of their ec - sta - cy of glee!
Trees are bend-ing, Gifts de - pend-ing, Bright arrayed the ev - er-green:

Hear the sound-ing And re-bound-ing Notes their tongues employ.
Thank-ful sing we, Thankful bring we Prais - es grate - ful - ly.
Ta - pers glow-ing, Garlands flow-ing,— Won - der - ful the scene.

SOLO OR SEMI-CHORUS.

Mer-ry Christmas song, Lin - ger loud and long;

CHORUS OR SEMI-CHORUS.

Mer - ry Christmas song, Lin - ger loud and

8va

Sweetest car - ols chime In the hal-lowed time.

long; Sweet-est car - ols chime the hallowed time.

8va loco.

X.

OLD HUNDRED:

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
Through every land, by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord;
Eternal truth attends thy word;
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

XI.

BENEDICTION.

Notes and News.

Literary Clubs.—One of the most hopeful signs of the day is the growing number of Clubs and Societies engaged in Mutual Improvement and Literary Study. It is a promise of a better culture soon to come. There is no more direct road to free thought and Liberal Religion than these. Literature is cosmopolitan. The Priesthood of Letters serve no sect and lend themselves to no dogma. Our friends throughout the West can do no better work in this direction than to organize for the winter. Bear in mind, such work is entirely practical among non-professionals if the following conditions are kept in mind:—1. Aim to *study* not to *create* literature. 2. Avoid red tape, parlimentary slang, etc. 'Tis best to have no "Mr. President," no formal reading of minutes, few motions and no speeches. 'Tis best to sit around a table and read and converse sitting, not standing. 3. Let no one talk about other than the matter in hand. 4. Let no two or three start side conferences; whispering in the circle is poor wisdom as well as bad manners. 5. The study had better be laid out in a *course*, among the Poets, Novelists, Artists of one school, or age, or country. so that one evening may whet the appetite for another. Biographical topics are most available. 6. Let the papers be short studies, and if there be a dearth of talk have more papers: *e. g.* Topic for the evening in a course on The American Poets is LOWELL—The following studies to be presented. *First Evening.* Biographical Sketch, Earlier Poems, Bigelow Papers and Vision of Sir Launfal. *Second evening*—Fable for Critics, Under the Willows, and other Poems, Cathedral and Memorial Ode and Prose Writings. This gives in two evenings eight different papers, fifteen minutes each, and two hours for comparison of notes and conversation, and the opening of a mine to be worked through life. 7. Don't undertake to exhaust the theme but to open it. Incite curiosity. Provoke home reading. Beware of long quotations. 8. Beware of Mutual Admiration Clubs. The dime, or even half-dime, left at the door is a better pledge of membership than ballots and invitations. In most towns there is little danger of attendance by an unsympathetic crowd. 9. Lastly, but chiefly, keep right on regularly and promptly. Begin and close to the minute. Rise superior to numbers. The Kingdom of Culture, which is one name for the Kingdom of God, cometh also without observation.—J. LL. J.

Hints for Mothers' Meetings—We, the undersigned, believing that ignorance in the mother is danger to the home, and that the elevation of the next generation waits on the devotion and wisdom

of this, and realizing that the special duties of domestic life require special preparation from those most responsible, unite for the study of the following subjects :—

"Physiology and practical hygiene, including healthful cooking. dressing, etc." "Public sanitary conditions and laws and prevention of disease." "The art of nursing." "The care of infants." "The laws of heredity." "The home training of children, physical, mental, and moral." "The science of school education." "The true relation of the sexes." "The legal condition of woman as maiden, wife, mother, and widow." "The relation of the home to public morals." "The art of house-building and decoration, and any other topic relating to woman's special interests, or to home management."

We propose to organize into a society, by the election of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and four standing Committees into which the whole membership of the association shall be divided; *viz.:* Committee on Hygiene; Committee on Morals; Committee on Education; Committee on Art. The Committees shall severally have charge of the topics grouped under their divisions, and shall collect statistics, gather information, and furnish instruction to the whole meeting upon subjects belonging to their departments.—*Anna C. Garlin, in Sunday Afternoon.*

Persons and Things ——Rev. F. L. HOSMER accepts a call to the Unitarian Society in Cleveland, Ohio, to enter on his work there at once.——Rev. HENRY C. BADGER of Ithaca, N. Y., preached for Mr. SUNDERLAND at Ann Arbor, Dec. 1. Mr. BADGER will begin on the first of January a series of Sunday Evening lectures in his own pulpit at Ithaca, on "The Life of the Hebrew Peoples and the Growth of our Bible."——Rev. F. E. KITTREDGE of Muskegon, Mich., was surprised and made happy the other evening by having the parsonage stormed by 125 of his friends, bringing turkeys, barrels of apples, various articles of beauty for the house, coffee and cake, ten dollar bills, and so forth. The Unitarian Society in Muskegon is taking a new lease of life since the repair of its house of worship. The ladies are working with especial vigor and efficiency, and Mr. KITTREDGE's congregations, particularly those which come out to hear his Sunday evening lectures, are reported large.——Rev. OSCAR CLUTE at Iowa City, the seat of the Iowa State University, is preaching this month on "The Soul," "The Destiny of the Soul," "The Decay of the Devil" and "Religion, its Nature and Uses," and lecturing Sunday evenings to young people on "Habits," "Work," "Faithfulness," and "Foundations." An Iowa City paper says:——"The organization of the Unitarian and liberal Christian sentiment in this dity in the Universalist church is now complete. Rev. OSCAR CLUTE has suddenly fused these elements into a hopeful band of earnest workers. The church

is one of the finest in the city, is all paid for, and all finished except the tower and basement. The building cost $18,000, has nearly a thousand sittings, and the auditorium is tastefully and comfortably furnished. It is intended to finish the basement for Sunday-school purposes this winter, and in the spring to complete the *campanile* tower. The new society is thoroughly filled with the earnest enthusiasm which Mr. CLUTE is so well able to inspire and sustain."——The Universalists of New Hampshire, at their last State Convention, unanimously resolved not to ordain any habitual user of tobacco. They evidently entertain the old fashioned idea that cleanliness and godliness have some connection.——The DesMoines (Iowa) papers give frequent notices and reports of the sermons of Rev. J. R. EFFINGER, who is striking telling blows for Reformed Christianity at the capital of that great State.——The ladies of the Evansville (Ind.) Unitarian Society have raised two-thirds money enough to cushion the pews of their church. But cushioned pews need a carpeted floor to match; so Rev. GEO. CHAINEY offers a copy of his book "Foundation Stones," to every one who will send them a dollar with which to buy a yard of carpet. Where are the friends who will send in the dollars?——Says the *Christian Register:* "Rev. W. H. SPENCER, of Haverhill, is slowly coming up from a long illness, during which his pulpit has been supplied by his wife, ANNA GARLIN SPENCER, who has rare gifts for public service. Last Sunday, she preached on exchange with Rev. J. L. DUDLEY, of Boston.——ROBERT INGERSOLL lectured in Cincinnati on "Some Mistakes of Moses," whereupon Rev. C. W. WENDTE preached upon "Some Mistakes of Ingersoll," a timely sermon full of strong points. It was printed in the *Cincinnati Commercial* and the *Chicago Tribune.*

Mr. Chadwick's New Book.*—A volume for which so much is claimed as is claimed for the Bible, ought to be diligently studied. The fact seems to be that the vast majority of those who accept it as the word of God know nothing of its origin and history. Very few clergymen, indeed, have given the subject much attention, taking it for granted that what is claimed in regard to it is necessarily true. Back of all questions of exegesis is the question of origin, formation and reliability. Let these questions be settled, and most others are settled with them. He who has not made a thorough study of them, reading carefully the best critical authors on all sides, is unfit to interpret the Bible. Not one in a hundred of those who weekly "expound" the Bible, have made of it such a study.

Two excellent little books have just been published which will be of help to those who wish to know how the Bible is to-day regarded by independent thinkers. They admirably supplement each other, and together make a very helpful exposition of the Bible. Mr. SUNDERLAND, in his volume, "What is the Bible?" reviewed by Mr. GILMAN in the last number of UNITY, considers the nature, origin and

growth of the Bible, its character as to truthfulness, and the nature of its inspiration. Mr. CHADWICK's "The Bible of To-day" is really an introduction to the Bible, giving briefly what is known about the author, date and history of the books. It is a course of eight lectures delivered in his church a year ago by the author. He has admirably summed up the results of the historic method, as applied to the Bible by the best students, and his lectures will enable any one to read intelligently the various books. The first three lectures lose much in their power to help the ordinary reader because they take up the books of the Old Testament in the order in which they are printed instead of in a chronological order. The Bible can only be fully understood in connection with the development of its religion. To interpret the books, therefore, we must read them in connection with the events which drew them forth. The later lectures, for this reason, are much the best and most helpful. To commend this work, it needs only to be said that it is the only work which can be procured in this country which will inform the general reader of what is now taught about the Bible, by those who have studied it without bias. It admirably sums up, with the most unflinching pen, the results attained by the most patient and earnest search after the truth. In the Old Testament it follows KUENEN mainly, and in the New Testament BAUR. These men have revolutionized our understanding of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. For most readers, Mr. CHADWICK's book will be far more helpful than the larger ones of critical scholars, because he has, with the most admirable literary instinct, given just the facts the reader wishes to know, in plain language, and with the reasons why distinctly set forth.

Mr. CHADWICK offers no apologies for his positions. He does not try to smooth over the fact that the Gospel of John is a spiritual romance, and the Acts without value as history, by saying they are just as helpful as ever. He gives the conclusions of unbiased critical study, and leaves his work there. He shows that the Bible religions were natural in their origin, and that they grew by natural courses. He sees no supernatural element in Christianity,—simply the most natural growth out of previous elements of religious development.

These two books clearly relieve Unitarianism of the charge, truly enough made, of dealing in concessions, and of not standing anywhere in particular. If some one now will as honestly and clearly start out from the position here taken, and show us what religion rests on, and that it does not at all need the support of an infallible Bible, then we shall be in quite a helpful position. After such clear and strong dealing with the Bible, it cannot be asked: "Are we yet to look to it as the basis of our theology? If not, where?" Surely, having shown that God has not spoken this book into infallible existence, it is time we began to know on what basis morality and religious truth is to rest. Who will write a book of theology to supplement these two most excellent little books, and show as clearly and strongly why, and how, religion is natural to man, how it comes, and what it is which it promises. We have most rightly been accused of dallying with the Bible. We cannot be so accused any longer. Can we not be accused of dallying with theology and the foundations of religious thought? If so, who will help us to know where we stand, and why we stand there. —G. W. C.

*"The Bible of To-day;" A course of lectures, by John W. Chadwick. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 16mo., pp. 304. Price, $1.50.

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF THE

CHICAGO WOMAN'S LIBERAL UNION.

(A.) RELIGION IN HISTORY.

II. Modern Religious History.

For general reference see Milman's Histories of "Christianity" and "Latin Christianity," White's "Eighteen Christian Centuries" Guizot's "Civilization," Buckle's "Civilization," Priestley's "History of the Corruptions of Christianity" Hagenbach's "History of Doctrines" Stanley's "Eastern Church." Macauley's Essay on "Ranke's History of the Popes," etc. Should the student desire to precede the study of the History of Christianity with that of the founder and chief apostles she will naturally have recourse to such authorities on the Life of Christ as Renan, Farrar, Furness, and such other works as Seelye's "*Ecce Homo*," Frothingham's 'Cradle of Christ," also to Renan's "St. Paul" and "The Apostles," Arnold's "St. Paul and Protestantism," etc.

(a) Catholic Christianity.

1. The Primitive Church.	[*a*] Catacomb Period; [*b*] Early Fathers of the Church; Augustine, Jerome, Cyril, etc. [*c*] Asceticism; see Kingsley's "Hermits."
2. Christianity fr'm Constantine to Theodosius.	[*a*] Arianism and other heresies of this period. See Lamson's "First Three Centuries." [*b*] Establishment of Christianity under Constantine. [*c*] Revival of Paganism under Julian. [*d*] Theodosius, and the doctrine of the Trinity.
3. Christianity fr'm Theodosius to Charlemagne.	[*a*] St. Benedict and the Rise of Monasticism· [*b*] Doctrines respecting the Virgin, Sacraments, Relics, Image Worship, etc. [*c*] Conversion of the Barbarians; St. Augustin in England. [*d*] Internal organization of the Church. [*e*] Review of lives of principal popes to, and including, Gregory the First.
4. Mohammed, and Influence of his Teaching on Christianity.	See Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism;" "Islam," in Deutsch's "Literary Remains;" Carlyle's "Hero Worship,"—Lec. II; Irving's Mohammed. Draper's Interual Development of Europe, chap. XI, or his Conflict of Science and Religion.
5. Christianity fr'm Charlemagne to Gregory the Gr't.	[*a*] Increase of temporal power of the Papacy; Nichclas I. [*b*] Disruption of Eastern and WesternChurches. [*c*] Doctrines respecting the Holy Spirit, person of Christ, etc. [*d*] Scandals of the Church in the tenth century, and reforms of Gregory the Great..
6. Christianity fr'm Gregory the Gr't to the Reformation.	[*a*] The Crusades; Templars and other religious orders. [*b*] Scholasticism; Anselm, Abelard, Aquinas, Duns Scotus. [*e*] Struggle between Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII, and removal of the Holy See to Avignon. [*d*] Growing splendor and abuses of the Church; Julian II and Leo X. [*e*] Ignatius Loyola and the Jesuits.

The concluding parts of this programme will be given in our next number.

TO THE FRIENDS OF "UNITY:"

We feel moved to take you into our confidence, hoping thereby to secure your coöperation in our plans looking towards the enlargement and cheapening of "UNITY." Our year's experience has been gratifying in a constantly increasing assurance that there is a place for such a paper, and that in a reasonable measure we have succeeded in filling it. With no special facilities for advertising or canvassing, we have already reached a *bona-fide* list of about twelve hundred subscribers.

We desire to *add eight pages* to the size, thus enabling us to preserve the essay, devotional readings and Sunday School departments, and at the same time give more room for "Notes and News," and especially *Editorial Articles*—Rev. H. M. SIMMONS, of Kenosha, having consented to be associated with the editorial work.

We are also desirous of reducing the subscription price to *One Dollar* per annum, believing thereby we can make "UNITY" the genuine missionary we aim at—one that will visit hundreds of isolated Liberal homes, carrying with it the FELLOWSHIP for which so much of the FREEDOM and CHARACTER of the West is hungering for.

All this can be done with an increase of *eight hundred subscribers* and a small guarantee fund to meet emergencies. Without such increase and such fund, we cannot risk, at one and the same moment, enlargement by one-third in the size and reduction by one-third in the price. This year the generosity of a few friends gave us a fund of about $600. The same sum again seaured will carry us safely through our hoped-for changes.

Will you help us?

1. By directly increasing our subscription list.

2. By interesting the friends known to you and unknown to us in this canvass.

3. By making yourself, and securing from others, such subscriptions to our guarantee fund as your means and our claims will justify.

We look first to the ministers of our faith for their coöperation. Will they not all, or most of them, follow the example of those noticed in the current number (Dec. 15), give their word and works for "UNITY," making it a unity of purpose and good works as well as of faith, hope and ideas.

We look to the women, whose deep interest in advanced thought and untrammeled religion is just manifesting itself in many ways. *It lies within their power to put "UNITY" on a firm basis.*

Lastly, and chiefly, we look to the subscribers of "UNITY" themselves; they best know what it is, and what we want it to be. There are over two months yet before the beginning of our new year, (March first)—time enough to accomplish much. We urge prompt action. Let us hear from you. Write freely to our agent your suggestions and criticisms. If it is what you want, help us to continue it. If not, help us to improve it.

ROBERT COLLYER,
JENK. LL. JONES,
W. C. GANNETT,
C. W. WENDTE,
JOHN C. LEARNED,
} Publishing Committee.

Chicago, Dec. 15, 1878.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

—OF—

WESTERN UNITARIAN HEAD-QUARTERS,

75 Madison St., Room 57. Office Hours, 9 A. M. to 4 P. M.

"UNITY."

PAMPHLET MISSION, Vol 1. A limited number of Volume I has been neatly bound in flexible cloth, with index. This volume, containing twelve sermons characteristic of the Liberal Faith, by such representative men as Collyer, Frothingham, Simmons, Chadwick, and others, with reviews of some twenty-two Liberal books, reports of ten Conferences, makes a capital volume for missionary work. For this purpose the price has been fixed to merely cover the binding and postage, 50 cents. Subscribers returning to us in good order the unbound numbers, will have a bound volume returned for 40 cents.

ARREARAGES.—The few subscribers who have not yet sent their subscription for the current year are requested to do so at as early a date as possible, that we may close our year's work in good shape.

FUTURE PLANS.—Our plans for the next year are fully set forth in the circular we send you. We shall aim to keep up the standard of our weighter articles, and hope to add eight pages to the size, that the news and editorial department may be made more satisfactory, adding Mr. Simmons to the editorial corps, and at the same time reduce the price to One Dollar per year. To warrant this, at least eight hundred more subscribers are needed. If each of our present subscribers should promptly renew and add one more to the list, the thing would be more than realized. Will each take hold and help us. Subscriptions will be received at one dollar, with the understanding that it will secure the "UNITY" for the next year if the above result be reached; if not, for two-thirds of the year.

NOT CHROMOS, BUT PREACHERS.—Rev. Robert Collyer offers for the next three months to give missionary preaching service on week-day evenings, at any point within one hundred miles of his home, for twenty-five cash subscribers to UNITY, and railroad expenses. This is a rare opportunity to get a large hearing for our spoken word, and at the same time spread our written word. Not to be behind, Messrs. Gannett, Jones, Simmons, Gordon, and others, make the same offer for ten subscribers and expenses. We doubt not but that nearly all the ministers in the West will be glad to do a similar thing, but we have had no time to correspond. Any point accepting this offer will send a request to this office, with the name of the minister desired. Speakers willing to enter into this arrangement are also requested to inform this office.

SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPS.

"THE SERVICE OF JOY" for Christmas is published in this number. Extra copies, $2.00 per hundred.

"THE TWELVE LESSONS ON HOME LIFE," by Mesdames Lesley and Head, will begin January 1, 1879.

"UNITY SERVICES," by J. Vila Blake, will be ready Dec. 20. Single copy, 25 cents Per dozen, $2.00. Per hundred, $10.00. No reduction on these prices.

"TOOL CHEST," revised and enlarged, printed in circular form, supplied at five cents per copy.

"CORNER-STONES OF CHARACTER,"—"Unity" Lessons, first series, by Mrs Kate Gannett Wells. Neatly stitched, and interleaved. Single copy, 15 cents; per dozen, $1.25.

BOOK ROOMS.—A complete line of the American Unitarian Association Publications and Tracts is now upon our shelves. We have facilities for procuring any Liberal books in the market. Orders solicited.

Publications just received from Jansen, McClurg & Co.:

"What is the Bible?"—J. T. Sunderland, $1.00. "The Bible of To-day,"—J. W. Chadwick, $1.50. "American Colleges,"—Chas F. Thwing, $1.00. "Selections from the Apochrypha,"—Wisdom Series, 50 cts. "The Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach,"—Wisdom Series, 50 cts.

THE WOMAN'S LIBERAL UNION OF CHICAGO.

This Society desires the co-operation of the ladies of the West in advancing Liberal Ideas by study and contribution. The expenses of this room are assumed by this Society.

Donations already received from Ladies' Societies:

St. Paul, Minn.,	$10.00.	Geneva, Ills,	$2.00.
Janesville, Wis,	11.00.	Third Un. Church, Chicago,	12.00.

All further contributions will be acknowledged in this department.

Friends from a distance, when in the city, are invited to call.

F L. ROBERTS, Supt.